

NEW  
SERIES

JUNE

VOL.  
40

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM  
YEAR TO YEAR."

# All the Year Round

a  
Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

PART 223.

PRICE  
FIFTEENPENCE.

1887.

LONDON  
26 WELLINGTON ST.  
STRAND.  
W.C.

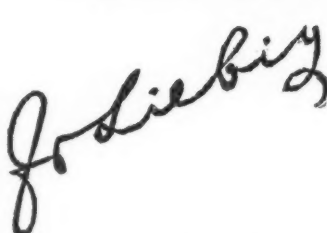
Nos.  
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## CONTENTS OF PART 223.

No. 966.	PAGE	No. 968.	PAGE
Gretchen. Book IV. Chapter II. ....	457	Gretchen. Book IV. Chapter IV. ....	505
Houses .....	461	Goethe and Carlyle. In Two Parts. Part I. ....	508
Anecdotes of the French Stage. ....	464	The King's Evil .....	513
Anemones. A Poem .....	468	Eliza. A Story in Three Chapters. Chapter III. ...	516
Tamba. A Queensland Bush Idyl. ....	468	Along the Adriatic. Part I. Brindisi .....	520
Uncle Bob's Niece. Chapter VII. ....	477	Uncle Bob's Niece. Chapter IX. ....	525
No. 967.			
Gretchen. Book IV. Chapter III. ....	481	Gretchen. Book IV. Chapters V., VI. ....	529
All the Year Round. June .....	484	Goethe and Carlyle. In Two Parts. Part II. ....	533
Eliza. A Story in Three Chapters. Chapters I., II. ....	490	Chronicles of the Welsh Counties. Denbigh and	
The Sculptor's Story. A Poem .....	496	Flint .....	530
Chronicles of Welsh Counties. Anglesey, Caernar-		Criminal and Legal Curiosities .....	544
von, and Merioneth. ....	497	Uncle Bob's Niece. Chapter X. ....	548
Uncle Bob's Niece. Chapter VIII. ....	501		

Also the EXTRA SUMMER NUMBER, containing  
 "The Reign of the Roses," "In Glitter or in Gold?" and Stories for the Summer Season by Popular Authors.



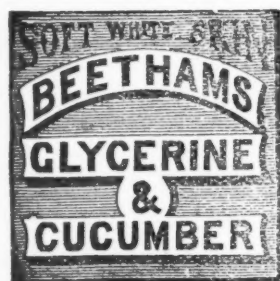
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"In a work on the subject of corpulency, recently published by Mr. F. C. RUSSELL, of Woburn House, Store St., Bedford Square, London, whose treatment for the cure of corpulency has become so popular, he clearly proves from his experiences in a vast number of cases brought under his notice, that stout persons are usually the most temperate. He also makes it very clear that corpulency is a disease, and a dangerous one; and while insisting that it should be treated as such, strongly disapproves of the system of attempting to remove superfluous fat by a course of emaciating drugs; pointing out with truth that even where it is possible to get rid of a few pounds of fat by this dangerous means, the reduction is only temporary and the fat returns more rapidly than it left, and one does not want to be taking physic for ever. In contrast to this doubtful method of procedure, Mr. RUSSELL attacks the disease as it were at the fountain-head. The medicine he prescribes does not lower, but builds up and tones the system; in short, Mr. RUSSELL'S aim is to *eradicate*, to *cure* the disease, and that his treatment is the true one seems beyond all doubt. There seems no longer any necessity to carry about with us the incubus of corpulency when it may so easily be got rid of; and we advise those who have not done so to send for Mr. RUSSELL'S interesting book. The book contains, among other useful information, the Recipe, showing the harmless nature of the drugs used."

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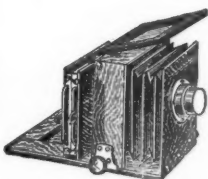
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THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal  
CONDUCTED BY  
CHARLES DICKENS

NO. 966. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, JUNE 4, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dame Durden," "My Lord Conceil,"  
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

### BOOK IV.

#### CHAPTER II. RESOLUTIONS.

SORELY against the doctor's wishes, and still more against Gretchen's, Adrian Lyle had himself removed to the village inn two days after he had informed her of his resolution.

Worn, weak, wasted, he looked a mere shadow of the strong, brave manhood he had represented a few weeks back. But he was resolute in his determination to leave her roof, knowing now that some treacherous purpose must have lured him there, and fearing trouble for Gretchen in the future, which he would be powerless to avert.

For, like a revelation, there had come to him in his hours of sickness and danger, the belief that Bari had fathomed his secret. A hundred little things served to convince him that this fancy was correct, and he feared the subtle machinations of that wily mind, and dreaded, too, that Gretchen's innocent life might be soiled or smirched by suspicion.

No one should say in the future that he had remained for one hour longer than was imperative and necessary under her roof. There was proof, and to spare, of that. So, gently and firmly, and at his own risk and peril, he put aside her pleas and entreaties, and turned away from her gentle ministry to the rough and grudging care of strangers.

But he felt it was right, and, once feeling that, it was not in Adrian Lyle's nature to swerve aside for any temptings of expe-

dience, or desire. He had ample time for thought during the weary days which followed his removal; ample time in which to face his life as it would look and be in the future. There was no use in putting the question aside; no use in saying he had dreamt a foolish dream. Only too well he knew that that dream was his life's earnest—that without hope, without help, without desire or wish of his own, he loved this girl, who could never be anything to him; whose heart was given in its first fond idolatry to a selfish and unworthy man.

"It is too late to hide the truth now," he told himself in these hours of dreary self-communing. "Every heart has its burden. Mine is but like the rest. Perhaps in time I shall get used to it—in time—"

He drew his breath sharp, the pain was still so hard to bear; the long, desolate future had never looked so desolate as now, when he set his face sternly towards duty as his only goal.

The doctor was much interested in his patient, and gave him more of his time and attention than he usually bestowed on sick folk. But he saw there was something about Adrian Lyle far beyond the ordinary type of men. He saw, too, that something was troubling him grievously, to the detriment of all drugs and potions; and that his progress back to health was far slower and less satisfactory than his perfect physique and splendid constitution had promised. But neither sympathy nor curiosity won a sign of self-betrayal from Adrian Lyle. He locked his secret into his heart's most sacred chambers. He would discuss anything and everything with the most perfect frankness, but never by word or sign give any hint of the one dark trouble which had come into his life.

Weakness and self-indulgence were not



things with which he had any sympathy. He was not likely, therefore, to allow himself the poor comfort of either. Manfully, sternly, bravely he fought the battle out with himself, knowing full well that he would bear its scars to the day of his death; blaming her in no wise, yet conscious to the full how entralling was the sweet, magnetic grace of her presence, and how vainly he had combated its charm.

"There is no use trying to explain it," he said; "I cannot do it. Perhaps there is no reason why I should. I—I have never tried to understand any woman; it did not seem necessary; and those I have known never seemed to me interesting. But she——"

Then he checked himself abruptly. What use to dwell on fair face, and tender smile, and every trick of manner and gesture which he knew too well?

"I must get well," he said, resolutely. "I must go back to work and duty. That will be the best cure."

Just then some letters were brought to him which had been sent on from Medehurst. One was from the Rector, pompously lamenting his illness, inasmuch as it had caused great inconvenience and disturbance to his reverend self, and was therefore something to be resented as an ill-advised and not altogether respectful proceeding on the part of a Curate; mingling parish details and personal complaints in a curious jumble.

There was another letter, written from Eaton Square, London, which had been sent to his lodgings at Medehurst, and now forwarded. It was dated some weeks back; an eloquent and grateful epistle from the young widow whose cause he had pleaded with Alexis Kenyon. It said how comfortable and happy the writer was, and spoke in high terms of the kindness of the lady in whose house she lived, concluding with innumerable thanks to him for the trouble he had taken on her behalf, in procuring her an engagement so much to her mind.

The letter astonished Adrian Lyle. Other events had followed so quickly on that interview with Alexis Kenyon, that he had never even thought again of the woman whose cause he had pleaded. Who then had done this service? It must have been Lady Breresford. It never occurred to him that Alexis Kenyon could have given the subject a moment's consideration after she had dismissed it in such scornful fashion. But he felt pleased

to think that the friendless woman whose cause he had pleaded, should have been so speedily aided and befriended.

He penned a few words of thanks to Lady Breresford, and forwarded the letter to the Abbey; then wrote to the Rector, saying that he hoped to be back at his post in a week at the latest; that he deeply regretted that circumstances had not permitted him to ask the reverend gentleman's permission to be ill, before taking the liberty of becoming so. He also enclosed a medical certificate as to the nature of that illness and his present condition.

Having thus relieved his mind, he got up and made a feeble effort to dress. The doctor had lent him an old velvet dressing-gown, which was much too short for his tall frame, but he wrapped it round him, and staggered weakly across the room to an easy-chair by the window. Then he sat down, panting and exhausted from his efforts—efforts born more of resolute will than physical powers.

It was close on sunset, and his gaze lingered rapturously on the gold and violet hues of the sky; on the far-off glow of the ripened cornfields; on the leafy shade of the thick woods stretching over the level country; on the herds of cattle crossing the grass-land; the distant figures of field labourers and children, their voices ringing glad and clear on the stillness.

"One ought to be grateful for life," he thought. "The world is so beautiful, and there is always something one can do for others."

As the thought ended with a sigh that would fain have been one of content, there came a knock at the door.

"Come in," he said, thinking it was the servant bringing in his tea.

It opened slowly. On the threshold stood Gretchen.

Though every day he had told himself she might come, yet her presence was enough of a surprise to set his pulses leaping madly and feverishly—to turn face and lips white as death as he gave her his hand, and felt the warm, firm clasp of hers.

"So you are sitting up!" she said, looking down with glad, sweet eyes at his face. "I am so glad! But how ill you look still! Are you wise? And do they take care of you here?"

"Oh, yes," he said with effort, "they are very good, and I am much better. Won't you sit down?"

"I have brought you some fruit," she

said, showing him the little basket in her hand. "Grapes, you see. I know they are good for sick people, and Peggy made you some jelly. We did not forget you, you see, though you were so anxious to get away from us."

"Is that still a grievance?" he asked, with the grave and tender smile which she knew so well. "How good of you to bring me this—to think of me at all!"

"I should be very ungrateful not to do that," she said, seating herself opposite to him. "I—I suppose," she went on suddenly, "I ought not to say so—but you look worse, much worse, than when you were with me."

"Do I?" he said lightly. "That is because I am up and in ordinary dress again. Don't you know that is the real test of invalidism?"

She was silent for a moment, studying him and his surroundings with a grave earnestness which amused and pained him at one and the same moment.

Suddenly she rose and fetched a pillow from the bed, and put it behind him in the great roomy chair; then she brought a footstool from another corner and placed it underneath his feet, and taking up a large, light, fleecy shawl which she had thrown down on her entrance, she placed it carefully over his knees. "Now," she said, withdrawing to a short distance and surveying the effect, "now that is better. You see you can't do without a nurse yet."

"I wish," he said huskily, "you would not trouble yourself about me. I am not used to—to—such attentions."

"You are not used," she said, "to being ill, so it is different. And men are so careless," she went on with pretty wisdom. "I suppose you forget that you have had that fever with the dreadful name, what you call rheu—rheum—a-tick, is it not? If I were your mother now, or sister, how I would make you take care!"

"Would you?" he said, with a weak attempt at a smile. "I should think it would feel very pleasant. I have never had anyone to take care of me."

"You never looked," she said, "as if you needed it before. But it is dreadful to see you so changed."

"I am a gaunt and terrible object, I know," said Adrian Lyle. "I am quite sorry to shock you so. Why did you come?"

"Perhaps I ought not to have come," she said. "I—I was half afraid; I

thought you might not like it—but I was very anxious about you."

It seemed to Adrian Lyle that no sweeter words would ever sound in his ears than those. He could not answer them for a moment. A mist seemed to float before his eyes; the sunny room grew dark.

When he had recovered himself, she was busy unpacking her little basket, and it was delight enough to him to lean back there on the pillows she had arranged, and watch her deft fingers; the grace of her every movement; the sunlight playing on her lovely hair; the pretty, tender care she manifested for his comfort.

Presently, the servant who waited on him brought in tea, and Gretchen arranged her fruit and jelly on the white cloth, and set a bowl of roses in the middle, and poured out his tea and brought it to him with her own hands.

How strange it seemed that she should be there, ministering to his comforts! How her personality affected the bareness and ugliness of the room! He leant back in the big chair, and seemed vaguely to realise what poets had said of the charm of a woman's presence.

The soft folds of the shawl on his knees seemed to breathe of her. The very flowers were associated with those days when he had first become conscious of where he was, and had seen her in her simple white gown with a rose at her throat. There was no resisting the magic of this hour. It had come to him unsought—full to the brim of passionate gladness, and yet more passionate dread.

But she was there, before him, close to him, and all the vague unreality of a dream seemed to hold his senses in check, and impress itself upon his brain.

He was very quiet, but his silence in no way distressed her. She felt that he liked to see her there, and the feeling held in it more comfort than she could have expressed.

It was very pleasant to her to minister to him. He, who was so big, and grave, and had always been so strong, was now helpless as a child, and dependent on a woman for those little cares and attentions which smooth the path of convalescence.

And it was just those little housewifely cares and attentions that were so bewildering to Adrian Lyle. That young, grave face was infinitely more charming in its gravity than in its smiles. It spoke of deeper feelings and deeper sympathies; it

moved him to reverence as well as to admiration.

The hour passed on, and the sunset faded, and he knew that a double darkness would fall upon him when her presence was withdrawn. Yet never, by word or look, did he cross the barrier he had raised between them; never by faintest sign betray that she was anything to him but a woman to be held in perfect and chivalrous respect.

"You will let me come again?" she said, standing with her hand in his for a moment, looking with compassionate eyes at the wasted face, and the loose wave of dark hair tossed back from the temples.

"Come once more," he said. "Just to bid me good-bye. I must go to my duties next week."

"If you had not been so ill," she said gently, "I would have asked you to explain more to me about all you said in Rome. I go to the church here, but I do not understand the service, and I do not like the priest. I wish I could hear you in your church."

He was silent for a moment, wondering in what subtle guise temptation would assail him next. "If I can be of any assistance to you," he said at last, "pray command me. If there is anything you would wish—explained——"

"There are a thousand things," she said despondingly. "But I will not trouble you. It would take so long."

His face grew white and somewhat stern. "I never flinch from duty," he said. "I am here for another week. Anything I can explain for you, I will."

"Thank you," she said simply. "Tomorrow is Sunday; may I come—tomorrow?"

"Certainly, if you wish," was the quiet response—quiet as only the bitterness of heart-ache and despair could make it.

But how should she know that?

"Fate is too strong for me," thought Adrian Lyle, as day after day brought with it that fair young presence; as day by day his earnest teaching and simple explanations brought the creeds and tenets of a noble faith more and more clearly to her anxious and doubting mind.

She was like a child needing help and encouragement, and like a child she would drink in his words, and listen to his reading of what had long been to her a forbidden Book. Her ignorance and helplessness touched him deeply. The task of lead-

ing that young soul to spiritual light and hope, was one that seemed intensely sacred. As strength and health came gradually back, he set all the resolution of his mind to this one object—putting aside his own pain, setting at naught his after-sufferings, if only he might give her help for future trial, or lead her to the highest and holiest of all Comforters, when some dark hour should fill her soul with sorrow.

So he taught, and so she listened in the waning glory of the summer days, and the week he had appointed for his task passed on, and another took its place, and a third dawned before he could quite set himself free. She had begun to depend on him as he had never dreamt she would, and she dreaded being left alone without counsellor or friend.

That difficulty—which is essentially a feminine one—of separating the teacher from the thing taught, made her cling to Adrian Lyle's presence as a surety of what was still vague, and dark, and unrealised. Without him, she felt like a rudderless boat adrift on a dark and unknown sea, and he could with difficulty persuade her that religion was a personal thing, to be carried on between the soul and its Creator without the intervention of any other human being, were he fifty times a priest.

Gradually, however, he saw a change. Perplexity and doubt were less painful. An aroused conscience and an earthly love seemed to have some common ground of sympathy, and Adrian Lyle's large-souled charity taught her how much it was possible to hope for that future, which all man's wisdom cannot make hopeful by light of science, or by power of reason.

He could have wished his task harder than it was; but with so sweet and trustful a nature he met with no difficulties save those of intense personal humility, and a fear of individual effort almost child-like.

But a day and hour arrived, when he knew he must leave at last. It was then she unconsciously tried all his hard-won control to the utmost. Seeing in him only the priest and not the man, it never occurred to her what tortures she was inflicting. It seemed to her a right and natural thing to sit at the feet, so to speak, of one so wise and good as her teacher; to join the intensity of feminine faith with a fervid belief in the spiritual altitude of its human expounder.

He had guided her through a maze of darkness. He had made life look a brighter,

and greater, and more noble thing than ever her imagination had pictured it. He had led her to the footstool of prayer, and opened to her the arms of that great and loving Fatherhood, which, till he spoke of it, had been veiled in mysticism, and shrined at unapproachable altars.

It seemed to her, therefore, but natural that her heart should overflow with gratitude, and express its grief for his departure with the sorrowful frankness of a child.

It was hard for him to look at the entreating face; the tearful eyes; the sad, beseeching lips, and know that by no word or look must he betray the danger of their spell. All that lay in his power he had done for her in his twofold character of man and priest. Now he told her gently, but firmly, that his own duty must no longer be neglected—that between herself and the God she worshipped must lie the secrets of her heart and the desires of her soul.

If any baser feeling for one moment allured him with its tempting, if the vague mystical wants, the appealing weakness, the childlike trust of that nature whispered how easily might the craft of priesthood spin its web of doom, how easily might the mask of celestial affinity be worn to blind those trustful eyes, it was but the tempting of one dark hour's despair, to be atoned for by such terrible penance of mental suffering as never brain of man conceived.

The hour of parting came, and he left her. She unquestioning, unsuspecting, and clinging to him with tearful entreaties and piteous regrets; and he standing in the mingled light and shadow of the day's last hour, a faint smile upon his lips, but on the haggard face the glow of a martyr's courage, and within the suffering heart, the agony of a man's despair.

"Tell Bari," she said, as she looked longingly up to him, "that for once in his life, he has done me a service. I feel I could almost thank him!"

Oh, light words, careless, inconsequent, impulsive, how darkly and with what bitter pain was the future to recall their memory, even as the past was stretching out to claim them with a hand of doom!

#### HOUSES.

It is a pleasant summer afternoon. We have chatted among our books, and about them and their makers. We have re-

freshed ourselves with "the cup that cheers," and now, dear reader, I propose a walk. We will go along the main road, which we will leave by a rustic stile, take a pleasant footpath by the side of the hedge, and, leaning on a gate at the end, we shall contemplate as pretty a rural scene as can be found anywhere within twenty miles of London. But what is this? The stile is gone; there is a broad road of thick mud across the field, the beautiful hedge is cut down, and the ground is cumbered with great heaps of bricks and piles of boards and poles. Alas! my friend, another of my favourite walks is doomed; for the arch enemy of rural beauty has arrived. Jerry and all his brethren are upon us! Along the main road we shall soon see a line of big houses, ornamented with all the latest fads—improvements, Jerry calls them. Behind will arise streets of showy-looking houses, whose only strength will be in numbers, holding each other up, mutual friends in brick. Lastly will come rows of fever traps; built with bad bricks, mud mortar, and unseasoned timber half the proper thickness; drained with broken pipes; roofed with slates that split and fall off; nailed with soft or brittle nails; lighted with windows of cheap, wavy glass in green-wood frames; having doors "next as imported," warranted to open in every panel after two months of sunshine. These, after being strengthened with putty, and beautified with paint and paper, will be published as the latest edition of the "Happy Homes of England," by Jerry and Son.

I see that my rural cottage will soon be "in populous city pent," and I must prepare myself for another migration. For years I have been striving to live amidst green fields where I might breathe the fresh air, and enjoy at times a solitary and silent walk, and yet be within what the advertisements term "easy access from the City." For years have I been thwarted by the demon builder, and driven to seek "fresh woods and pastures new." It is pitiful to think of the pleasant scenery he has destroyed, and the fine old houses that have fallen before him. Let us visit the neighbourhood, somewhat nearer London, from which I was last exiled by him. Standing a couple of hundred yards from where they are running up a row of suburban cottages, on the spot which last winter was a low-lying pool of water, we may look through the



broken hedge at that deserted mansion. A broad carriage-drive, sweeping round from the large gates of beautiful iron-work, leads up to a pillared portico. A fine, roomy, well-built, old mansion this. There are the remains of conservatories and greenhouses. We may be sure there are some good stable-buildings close by. Fifty years ago this was probably as secluded and quiet a spot as could be found in any distant shire. Hither would the merchant drive home at night from the City behind a couple of stout horses that would do the distance from Cornhill under the hour. Fruit trees, flower-beds, pine-houses, a well-cultivated kitchen garden, ministered to the rural tastes of the owner. On the lawn the little ones often played, or strolled with their governess. That big elm once shaded a pleasant seat, where the girls have wept over many a delicious novel, or furtively read and re-read some still more delicious billet-doux which had been deftly slipped into book or nosegay by young Hawkins of the Priory, or that splendid Lieutenant Brown, son of the eminent Alderman. But time has passed swiftly on: young Hawkins went over to the majority long ago; Brown was shot at Chilianwallah; and the mansion has found itself gradually surrounded by the destructive arms of the great octopus, London. No one who could pay an adequate rent would live now in this neighbourhood, and, as field after field around it becomes "ripe" for building, the good old mansion is doomed. Next year, if you walk this way, not a vestige of it will remain; but instead you will find Smart Street, Horse-shoe Crescent, and Mary Jane Avenue, in one of which thoroughfares will be erected a big public-house, with a billiard-room for the solace of the young City clerks who may find eligible apartments in this genteel suburb.

In some of the older parts of London, in or adjacent to the City, we may even now come across rows of houses, once inhabited by people of considerable pretensions, but now the homes of the lower classes. Stand with me, in imagination, in this court, as yet spared by railway companies, not yet bought up by speculator in gigantic warehouses or offices, and at present out of the line of new streets or model markets. The whole width of the thoroughfare is paved, with a narrow channel cut in the centre for a watercourse. There is no carriage road,

for the people for whom these houses were built came home, when they did not walk, from tavern, coffee-house, or theatre, in sedan-chairs. Lamps were slung across the street, or fixed to the fronts of the houses. If you should venture inside, you would find wide staircases with broad hand-rails, in some cases elaborately carved. The walls are wainscotted, the window-frames solid, with perchance here and there a pane of glass with a great knob in the centre, a relic of old times and old methods.

Standing in this dingy court, and meditating upon Georgian days, we gradually lose our mental hold upon the realities of the present. We see passing before us ladies with towering head-dresses, enormous hooped skirts, their dresses looped up in graceful folds, showing brilliant petticoats, gay clocked stockings, and dainty shoes. We see grave citizens, or foppish beaux, the sword protruding from the skirts of their gaily-coloured coats; their laced waistcoats nearly to their knees; their wigs of price; their long dangling cravats. Here is a courtly gentleman about to step into his sedan-chair, by the side of which stand two portly chairmen. A lady, looking from a window above, is saluted with an elaborate bow.

A noisy shout rouses me from my day-dream; the sedan-chair turns into a coster's barrow; the gentleman is Bill Smith just off to his "pitch" in Leather Lane, and the lady is Biddy Murphy, who is lolling at a first-floor window in such a state as might be expected of an Irish lady who has been "on the drink" for a week. "To such base uses may we come, Horatio!"

Truly, houses are like men in their fortunes. Some meet with reverses and come down in the world; some have a brief career; others attain to an old age of honour. Some become famous for having been the dwelling or the birthplace of a great man; others, because in them was conceived some noble writing or some famous plot. Some are notorious, like "the old house in West Street," known also as "Jonathan Wild's house," close to Saffron Hill. This place, with its dark closets, trap-doors, sliding panels, and secret hiding places, had been for many years a favourite refuge for highwaymen, burglars, and other rogues; and no doubt the corpse of many a murdered man has been thrown from it into the muddy stream of the Fleet Ditch. Having attained the ripe old age of three hundred years it was demolished,



and its site is one of the busiest spots in London, for it must be close to where the Metropolitan Railway enters Farringdon Street, right in the shadow of the Viaduct.

In some parts of London we may come upon several forlorn and neglected-looking houses, dirty, dilapidated, with every window broken, covered inside with black dust and cobwebs—a very picture of decay and desolation. The poorer inhabitants of the neighbourhood explain all this by styling them the “Haunted Houses.” They are in Chancery, and, if haunted, it is by the ghosts of wasted lives, of life-long hopes never to be fulfilled, of lives that might have been useful and glorious, wasted in that sickening waiting for a settlement and a to-morrow that never comes. Some houses which are credited with being haunted may, perhaps, have gained that reputation through being what we may term deserted houses. The owner takes a dislike to his house for some reason or other, and will neither live in it nor allow anyone else to do so. Perhaps the death of a beloved wife, or of an only son or daughter, has made it hateful to him; perhaps some hated scene in his life has occurred there, and he has doomed it, long before it came into his possession, to be a deserted house when in his power; perhaps some fearful secret, or undiscovered crime, has made his guilty conscience afraid to think of the house inhabited by human beings. Such a deserted house becomes a ruin, a place of fear and trembling, and, known for miles round as the “Haunted House,” is avoided by young and old.

A residence for woman, child, and man,  
A dwelling-place, and yet no habitation;  
A house, but under some prodigious ban  
Of excommunication.  
O'er all there hung a shadow and a fear;  
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,  
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,  
The place is haunted!

To some minds, every old house is haunted. Every chamber is visited by ghosts, memories of the past. Longfellow, in one of his poems, beautifully expresses this idea. He speaks of meeting them at the door, on the stairs, and in the passages. He feels their presence amongst the guests at table, and thinks,

The illuminated hall  
Is thronged with quiet, inoffensive ghosts,  
As silent as the pictures on the wall.

A small town-house, in which one feels everywhere close to the street, is hardly likely to encourage such thoughts as these; but an old-fashioned, rambling country-

house, with many passages, staircases with quaint corners, cheery window seats, and rooms which have been occupied by two or three generations of the same family is most congenial to these ideas. If you live and have lived in such a house as this, you are constantly meeting familiar ghostly forms. Just at that spot in the hall comes little Arthur, as you so often saw him running to meet you. At times you meet fair Ellen descending the stairs in her brown travelling dress, you see her smiling, trembling lip; her happy, tearful glance; just as when she left the dear old home with her companion on that journey of life, which, alas! proved all too short. In that seat by the window, you still fancy golden-haired Bertie sitting intently pouring over books of bold adventure, tales of battle and of travel; pirates, savages, diamonds, gold, sailors, storms, blue seas, and waving palms, all mingling in vivid pictures on his boyish brain, and stirring up his young heart to firm resolves of future brave and gallant deeds. There again you see him sitting with bronzed face, big beard, and broad shoulders, just as you found him when he first came back from China. Again, that chair is still called “Father’s,” at that door mother turned and smiled upon you as she said “Good-night” for the last time. To you and yours only are these visible.

The stranger at my fireside cannot see  
The forms I see, nor hear the sounds I hear;  
He but perceives what is; while unto me  
All that has been is visible and clear.

Perhaps the most ancient kind of house is that so dear to the old adepts and believers in astrology. The zodiac was divided by some of them into twenty-eight days or mansions, each giving some special power to the planet in it. Others divided it into twelve houses, the house of life, of fortune, of death, of dignities, and so on, giving to each house one of the planets as its lord or ruler. From the relative positions of these houses and the planets at any given moment, the astrologers professed to show the future connected with the event—a person’s birth, for instance—occurring at that instant. Reading the stars was therefore looked upon as a valuable method of obtaining a knowledge of secrets both of the past and the future. Many of the lower class of astrologers were ready to apply their pretended knowledge to the most humble purposes, and occupied much the same position as the less pretentious “wise men,” or fortune-tellers of later

times. Butler, in his *Hudibras*, makes many sarcastic allusions to them.

They'll search a Planet's House, to know  
Who broke and robb'd a House below :  
Examine Venus and the Moon  
Who stole a thimble or a spoon.

We are too wise to consult astrologers nowadays, but should a glib politician, who can talk for hours at a stretch, simply give us his word that certain things will happen if we do not follow his lead, we shout at once, "a Daniel, a Daniel," and vote him into power to save us from all kinds of terrible calamities. The mere fact that he has proved to be in the wrong over and over again is nothing. "Words, not deeds," is the motto of the time, and a jawbone is as powerful now as in the days of Samson. But as this brings us to the threshold of a house we do not care to enter, let us pass on quickly.

There are houses which have been built upon the sterling qualities and noble deeds of some brave, or wise, or honest persevering men, and have been supported by their worthy successors till we find them classed among the noble houses of the land. Not all great houses, however, have such honest foundations. Some have been founded on a fair lady's charms; some spring from the successful cringing of a wily courtier; others from the supple voting and artful manœuvring of a turn-coat politician.

The royal houses of England, among which we may surely class the Stuarts as an unlucky house, have, in their rising and falling, lifted and brought down many a noble family, brought many a head to the scaffold, and caused thousands of gallant men to shed their blood upon the battlefield. The quarrels of the houses of York and Lancaster filled the land with misery and bloodshed, set father against son, brother against brother, devastated the land, lost our possessions in France, and utterly destroyed many of the ancient noble families. That fatal morning in the Temple Gardens, when the roses were chosen as symbols of hatred instead of love, had far worse results than Warwick feared when he said the day

Shall send, between the red rose and the white,  
A thousand souls to death and deadly night.

The struggles of the house of Stuart against our liberties unsettled the land for a hundred years, and the incoming of the house of Brunswick caused millions of our money to be lavished on Continental wars.

The house which it is, perhaps, impos-

sible to contemplate without a feeling of sadness is that which closes the vista of too many a life. After years of hard work and misfortune, the workhouse is the only shelter which offers to some who may have deserved better things. Doubtless things are much more satisfactory than they were when Bumble had hundreds of living prototypes, and when Mrs. Corney was a true picture of what her admirer called "porochial perfection." But we fear that, in spite of years of ridicule, and sarcasm, and notices of the press, "the gentleman in the white waistcoat," the "Sowerberrys," and "the Board," still flourish to grind the faces of the poor, and to give them stones for bread.

How glad many must be to know that they will soon find a quiet place in that last narrow house, that house of clay to which all alike must come, rich or poor, peer or peasant!

Doorless is that house,  
And dark it is within;  
There thou art fast detained,  
And Death hath the key.

#### ANECDOTES OF THE FRENCH STAGE.

IN a scarce little pamphlet, published anonymously about 1830, are some interesting and not generally known details respecting the Parisian theatres, evidently compiled by a writer thoroughly conversant with his subject. A few of these, which to the best of my knowledge have not been recorded elsewhere, are sufficiently curious to merit reproduction.

The origin of the custom, according to which French dramatists are paid by a share of the receipts, dates from 1633; the first piece produced on these conditions, *Les Rivaux*, by Quinault, having been played in that year. It came to pass in this wise. From the limited number of theatres at that period, access to them was extremely difficult for authors unprovided with an established reputation; and this was precisely the case of Quinault, then at the commencement of his career, and entirely unknown. Fortunately for him, Tristan l'Ermite, a writer of acknowledged celebrity, and in high favour with the actors, interested himself in behalf of the young dramatist, and, in order to ensure the performance of *Les Rivaux*, offered it to the committee of management as his own work. Its acceptance followed, as a matter

of course, and the remuneration was fixed at a hundred crowns. No sooner, however, had the arrangement been made than Quinault was presented as the real author; whereupon the comedians, thinking they had been too liberal to an inexperienced beginner, reduced their offer to a sum of fifty crowns, which was refused. After much discussion—the piece having been meanwhile examined and approved—they proposed to allow the author a ninth part of the receipts for a certain number of representations, which was finally agreed to.

In our own days, the obstacles encountered by young writers are not less disheartening; one of the most insurmountable being the opposition of the house-authors, attached to certain theatres, jealous of any infringement of the quasi-monopoly enjoyed by them, and avowedly hostile to outsiders. Managers rely implicitly on the judgement of these "faiseurs," as they are generally styled, and seldom look at a piece from an unknown hand without first submitting the manuscript to one of them, and requesting his opinion of the work. The "faiseur," if unscrupulous, as is often the case, sees at a glance if any novel and effective incident can be advantageously utilised, and quietly makes a note of it. He then returns the manuscript to the manager as unsuitable, and loses no time in embodying the borrowed idea in a piece of his own, which is duly presented and accepted. At his suggestion the real author, who is naturally anxious to learn the fate of his production, is informed that one on the same subject has already been received, and is about to be put into rehearsal; upon which, if not entirely disgusted by his failure, he tries again; but always with a similar result. As a last resource, he applies to an experienced colleague, who graciously consents to examine the manuscript submitted to him, on the express understanding that, in the event of its being played, his name alone shall appear in the bills; and this condition complied with, the piece, if accepted by a manager, is in due course performed as the work of the celebrated author, who has not written a line of it. Should it prove successful, the latter becomes more tractable, and, not wishing to lose so promising a collaborator, permits him, on a second attempt, to share with him the honour of publicity, and even allows him a small percentage on the profits; so that, little by little, the young

writer emerges from obscurity, and is soon enabled to dispense with the by no means disinterested support of his patron. Many leading dramatists have begun their career in this way, and few underwent a longer or more tedious apprenticeship than Eugène Scribe, whose thirteen first essays, like the early operas of his future collaborator, Auber, were signal failures.

Old playgoers may remember the long-since demolished theatre of the famous rope-dancer, Madame Saqui, on the Boulevard du Temple. It was originally a "café-spectacle," where, in order to attract customers, a company of acrobats displayed their agility at stated hours of the day; these were succeeded by pantomimists, who, however, were only allowed to appear on condition that each actor should perform a feat of tumbling before his dumb show began; so that the lover of the troupe was literally debarred from paying his court to the lady of his affections without previously executing a somersault.

It is no uncommon thing in certain theatres for an actor to stipulate that, in addition to his regular engagement, another, at a considerable higher rate of salary, should be drawn out; the latter not being binding on the manager, but serving the double purpose of gratifying the comedian's vanity, and of enabling him to produce it in justification of his pretensions when contracting elsewhere. During Harel's management of the Porte St. Martin, Frederic Lemaitre's nominal salary amounted, with extras, to sixty thousand francs, an enormous sum in those days, and wholly disproportionate to the average receipts. The arrangement having been merely oral, the actor suggested that a formal engagement should be properly prepared and signed by both parties.

"By all means," said Harel, "provided you agree to what I am about to propose, namely, to a reduction of one half. Hear me out," he added. "Sixty thousand francs mean bankruptcy for me, and, consequently, nothing for you. If you take my advice, you will be satisfied with the credit of having them, and accept thirty thousand, and you will get your money!"

Frederic thought the matter over, and, rightly judging that half a loaf was better than no bread, finally consented.

Many years ago, I made the acquaintance in Paris of an old gentleman named Salé, whose father had been director of

the Théâtre des Associés — afterwards Théâtre Patriotique—from 1760 to 1795. Among other curious anecdotes relating to that epoch, he told me that the actors of the Comédie Française, hearing that several pieces belonging to them had been produced without their permission at the Théâtre des Associés, formally intimated to the manager that any further infraction of their privilege would inevitably entail on him the immediate suppression of his theatre. On the receipt of this missive, Salé wrote to them at follows: "Gentlemen, I intend giving to-morrow a representation of *Zaïre*, and request that you will honour me by witnessing it. If you recognise Monsieur Voltaire's tragedy as it is played by my company, I promise never again to borrow a single piece from you." At the appointed hour Lekain, Prévillo, and Bellecour, took their seats in a box reserved for them, and laughed so heartily from the beginning to the end of the "tragedy" that at the conclusion of the performance they with one accord withdrew their opposition, and informed the manager that their entire repertory was very much at his service.

Salé, by all accounts, was a proficient in the art of puffing, if we may judge from his announcement of *Le Festin de Pierre*, in which an actor called Pompée personated Don Juan, and was advertised in the bills to change his dress twelve times. "He will carry off the Commander's daughter in a coat of superfine velvet, and will be struck by lightning in a costume covered with spangles!"

The same gentleman related to me the following anecdote: "Among the many small theatres vegetating rather than flourishing at that period, was one called the Boudoir des Muses, where comedies of Molière were frequently given. A wag amused himself by signing a quantity of free admissions with the name of the great dramatist, and distributing them right and left. The number of these increased so rapidly that the manager, whose literary attainments were not of the highest order, became suspicious, and assembled his subordinates with the view of elucidating the matter. 'Some of you,' he said to them, 'ought to know by sight the authors of my theatre. When you see Monsieur Molière, tell him that I wish to speak to him, for he sends in more tickets than he has any right to.'"

Martainville, the editor of the "*Drapeau Blanc*," who in his youth had been

an indifferent actor, was once reproached by a colleague for his extreme indulgence as a theatrical critic. "I can't help it," he replied; "I have a fellow feeling for those who fail on the stage, for not one of them is half so bad as I was."

The present theatre, the Bouffes Parisiennes, in the Passage Choiseul, was originally founded by Comte in 1827, under the name of Théâtre des Jeunes Elèves, several actors of repute, including Hyacinthe, Francisque, and Colbrun, having commenced their career there. Comte was a clever ventriloquist, and the following story is recorded of him during a provincial tour. While strolling through a village near Châlons on a market day, he came across a peasant woman with a pig for sale, and offered to buy it, inquiring the price. "Sixty francs," she replied; on which a voice, apparently issuing from the animal's throat, declared that he was only worth five francs. Startled by this unexpected avowal, the woman uttered loud cries, and appealed to a "garde-champêtre" who was standing by for protection against the sorcerer—pointing to Comte—who had bewitched her pig. That functionary listened to her complaint with stolid gravity, and unwilling to incur any personal responsibility, decided on referring the matter to the mayor of the locality, who, when the case had been stated, asked Comte for an explanation, and could hardly believe his ears when the pig—at least, so it seemed—affirmed that he was glad of an opportunity of expressing his admiration of the skilful ventriloquist, Signor Comte. The affair, meanwhile, had made a great noise in the village, and the mayor's suggestion that the reputed conjuror should give a performance that evening in an outbuilding suitable for the purpose, was eagerly responded to by the inhabitants; part of the proceeds being liberally handed over to the owner of the pig, who went on her way rejoicing.

A French actor, engaged at St. Petersburg in 1840, arrived there in the depth of winter, and in the presence of the "moujik" in charge of his baggage, involuntarily shivered, and complained of the cold. An hour later, he was summoned to appear before the Minister of Police. "My good friend," blandly remarked that dignitary, "your intention, I believe, is to remain here several years; but, previously to deciding on so important a step, it may be as well for you to consider if the



climate is likely to suit you. If not, I should recommend you to return to France."

"May I presume to ask," replied the comedian, "why your Excellency deigns to interest himself about my health?"

"Because you have already made an unflattering allusion to the temperature of Russia."

"I could not suppose, your Excellency," objected the actor, "that I should incur your displeasure by saying that I was half frozen."

"Monsieur," gravely observed the minister, "in Russia, any open expression of opinion is, to say the least, imprudent. The matter in itself is unimportant, but it was my duty to take the first opportunity of impressing on you the policy of silence, the strict observance of which will be greatly to your advantage."

After a ten years' sojourn at St. Petersburg the actor returned to Paris, and among other incidents of the travel mentioned this interview.

"Did you follow the minister's advice?" asked one of his colleagues.

"Religiously," he replied; "and, to give you an example of my taciturnity, I used to play at dominoes at a café every afternoon; and although the double four was missing from the day of my arrival to that of my departure, I never even ventured to hint that it wasn't there!"

Some years ago, the passengers on board a steamer from Havre to New Orleans, included a company of singers engaged for the Opera of the latter city. One morning, when the sea was unusually calm and sickness temporarily forgotten, several of them appeared on deck, and by way of practice, essayed their voices in the favourite airs of their respective repertoires. Suddenly it became evident that no fewer than five tenors were among the number, and great was the wrath of each individual on the discovery. With one accord they appealed to the manager, upbraiding him for a palpable breach of contract; every one of them maintaining that he had been engaged as the sole tenor of the company.

"Gentlemen," replied the manager, "you have no reason to accuse me of disloyalty, or of having taken more than the necessary precautions. Before we have been a week at New Orleans, two of you will in all probability die of yellow fever, and two more during the rehearsals; I need scarcely add that the survivor, whoever he may be, will, according to

the terms of his engagement, be my only tenor."

During the reign of Louis Philippe, a dramatic author named Tournemine undertook the management of the Théâtre de Luxembourg, familiarly known as Bobino. Anxious to secure the patronage of the leading critics of the day, such as Janin, Théophile Gautier, and Eugène Guinot, he directed his secretary to write to them, soliciting the honour of their support, and informing them that free admissions to his theatre were accorded them. Six months later, while looking over the list of privileged visitors, he expressed a hope that every attention had been paid to the gentlemen in question; and was literally dumbfounded on hearing that not one of them had profited by the invitation.

"What!" he exclaimed, "is this the return for my civility? Write to them immediately, and let these ill-bred individuals know that their free admissions are withdrawn, and that henceforth, if they choose to come to my theatre, they may pay at the door like other people!"

On the occasion of the late Emperor's marriage, a gratuitous performance of The Huguenots was given at the Opera, and as usual attracted an immense crowd of spectators. One of these, a "dame de la Halle," sitting in the upper boxes and evidently desirous of prolonging her enjoyment to the utmost possible extent, vigorously applauded the solo vocalists, but listened impatiently to anything in the shape of a "morceau d'ensemble." Far from being impressed by the magnificent chorus, the "Blessing of the Poniards," she rose from her seat and indignantly exclaimed; "Ah, the rascally cheats, they sing all at once that they may have done the sooner!"

A royal Duke, wishing to present an actor of a Boulevard theatre with a token of his approval, decided on sending him a snuff-box, but first commissioned his secretary to ascertain if the artist in question took snuff. The offer was accepted with enthusiastic gratitude.

"Very good," said the secretary, "give me your address, and you shall have it to-morrow."

"If it is all the same to you," replied the actor, "the best plan would be to deposit it at the Mont de Piété, and to send me the ticket and—what you get for it!"

Thirty or forty years ago, a fairy spectacle called "Zazezizozu," was produced at the Cirque Olympique, a principal feature in it



being the representation of a game of dominoes, each personated by a "super." At the first rehearsal of the piece, one of these complained bitterly of the flagrant injustice experienced by him.

"What do you mean?" inquired the stage manager.

"Mean, sir! The way in which I have been treated is positively scandalous. Here is a young fellow engaged last week, who is cast for the double six, while I, who have belonged to the Cirque for twenty years, am only thought worthy of the double blank!"

The following letter, addressed by Mdlle. Rachel to a dramatic critic, is a pretty specimen of her familiar style.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Some well-informed people tell me that I have a chance of making up our quarrel, and I shall soon see if they are right. Enclosed is a box ticket for this evening. If you come, I will play Camille (in Les Horaces) extremely well; if you do not, I shall revenge myself by playing it better still, in order that you may regret not having accepted my invitation!—RACHEL"

#### ANEMONES.

It was a happy holiday of ours!

When first we trod the sunny southern shore!

'Twas that poor patch of closely-tended flowers

I saw, this moment, through the hot-house door,

That sent my fancy flying o'er the seas,

To that bright day we saw Anemones—

Saw them in glory, do you recollect?

Or are the trackless plains of Heaven too fair

To care how richly, royally, they decked

The mountain-side, as we stood lingering there,

Happy in wonder, beauty, love—we two;

How much of all has passed from life with you!

Above us shone the bright Italian sun,

Below, the "city of the golden shell;"

Around, the haunts we knew when life begun,

Through the old pages that we loved so well;

And all about us sky, and hill, and sea,

Lay in the glory that was—Sicily.

And spreading far adown the mountain-side,

The flashing masses of the flowers sprung;

And as we looked from where, in marble pride,

She, 'mid her jewels, lay, who died so young;

Down Pellegrino swept the scented breeze,

And "Look," you said, "at the Anemones!"

How all the crimson living lustre swayed

Like rosy billows on the ocean swell;

Then tossed their fairy heads as if they made

A voiceless music from each fragile bell;

Till, dazzled by their glow, we turned away.

Have you forgotten, dear, that crowning day?

Forgotten our sweet month of wandering?

Forgotten our long life of flawless love?

Forgotten our slow parting's bitter sting?

In the blessed waiting of the life above?

They are but English blooms I train to wave

Beside the northern sea-board, on your grave.

#### TAMBA.

##### A QUEENSLAND BUSH IDYL.

IN those days—now, alas! gone by—when heart was young, when hope was strong, when courage was firm, and when muscle and thew and sinew were braced up for toil, it was my fortune to come into possession of a virgin tract of land in the far west of the Colony of Queensland, some two hundred square miles in area, which it was my endeavour to form into a sheep-run, or station. The toil was hard, the difficulties formidable, and at first the hand of Fortune unkind; but, battling with the ardour of youth, with the sanguineness of an untried courage too young to know defeat, the nucleus of what was to be in the future a fairly-developed station evolved itself slowly out of the primitive elements of trackless bush and unwatered grass-lands.

It was there, in this unpromising field of labour, that I made the acquaintance of Tamba. I had started from the nearest station for my El Dorado, in command of a caravan of men, drays, horses, stores, and necessaries, with which to attack the primeval tract which had become mine by right of purchase, and make it habitable for man and beast. We had slowly made our way to our destination, each day leaving farther and farther behind us all trace of settlement, penetrating more deeply into the unwatered district in which Nature reigned supreme. Our stages were short and our progress slow; but, at last, we found ourselves in the grassy flat boasting a large water-hole, which, in previous survey, I had determined should be the scene of our first settlement.

It was soon after our arrival in this spot that I made the acquaintance of Tamba. The place was, as I soon found out, a great resort of the aborigines in the rainy season, abounding as it did in all game native to the country; though, during the hot summer months, it was totally deserted on account of the surface-water, which offered a plentiful supply during the winter, drying quickly up under the scorching rays of the summer sun. It was the rainy season that I had taken advantage of in making my first attempt at settlement, and it was the rainy season that brought a great number of the native blacks, from far and near, for the purpose of hunting.

Most of those had received a slight veneer of civilisation, those especially who

had come to retire, temporarily, from irksome employment as shepherds and stockmen on those "little worlds of toil," the neighbouring stations; throwing off the restraints of labour, and trusting solely to dog, spear, and boomerang for the means of existence. Others there were who, scorning the patronage of the white man altogether, lived a roaming life on the banks of the neighbouring rivers, and who, when the supply of surface-water permitted, were wont to push back to less favourably watered regions, finding the summer's drain of game impoverish their customary river hunting-grounds.

But it was to the former class Tamba belonged. She herself was a half-caste child of about twelve or thirteen, when I first made her acquaintance. She came under the care of a black fellow and his "gin," and was accompanied by a half-caste boy—evidently her brother.

This dusky family was the first contingent of coloured humanity that made its appearance in our midst. They came upon us quite suddenly, the woman carrying the portable property of the family, consisting of three discoloured blankets, a water-bag, and what is typically called in the bush a billy, otherwise a can for the making of tea; the man walking proudly ahead, uncontaminated by burthen other than tomahawk, boomerang, and spear. Without the slightest parley or hesitation they came up to our camp-fire, and both man and wife producing short, discoloured clay pipes, lighted them with a glowing ember. After a few preliminary whiffs, the black fellow turned and addressed me.

"Me Boman Jimmy. That Sal, wife belongin' me. That Tamba, little feller girl. That Jimmy-Jimmy, little feller boy. We've come stop alonga you. Me been shepherdin' alonga Woolero," a neighbouring station, as I knew. "You got backer? Gimme some. Baal," a negative employed almost universally by Australian natives, "baal, me got any."

They camped near us that night, and the next day Mr. Boman Jimmy came up and offered the services of himself and family for the consideration of "tucker" (that is, daily rations of food) for himself and constituents; to which I agreeing—as I could employ him and the boy in looking after the horses and getting back for building purposes, and the woman in looking after the camp domestic drudgery—it came about that Mr. Boman Jimmy and his

family became hangers-on in my primitive household.

The children—I do not know how they came to look upon the black fellow and his wife as their parents, for, as I have said, they were both half-castes and, necessarily, partly of other parentage—the children soon settled down in their new sphere, and proved the life and spirit of our encampment. They were not black, nothing like their immediate protectors, and having white blood in their veins, showed it by a lightening of the dusky complexion and a European regularity of feature, that made them as different from Boman Jimmy and his good lady as the first shades of evening are from the black clouds of night. The girl Tamba was even lighter in complexion than her brother, and possessed features that were little short of beautiful. She was a tall, lithe girl, with a sweep of limb a sculptor would have delighted to model; a freedom and grace of motion that a wild, untrammelled life such as hers would alone have engendered; and a happy, childish, ingenuous manner totally at variance with the taciturn stolidity natural to the tribes amongst which she dwelt. Her brother, Jimmy-Jimmy, was a good-looking, sturdy boy, intelligent, and extremely fond of his sister.

From the time these two children made our encampment their home, the grassy flat became the scene of a veritable bush idyl. The happy voices of the two children could be heard from morning to night, making the gloomy woodlands gay with their joyous laughter. The whole place seemed to be enlivened, and wore a brighter aspect from their presence. Even the workmen—rough bush pioneers—seemed to derive pleasure from their harmless gaiety. I never heard a harsh or unkind word spoken to either the boy or girl by any one of them; and some of the men I had with me were of the roughest and most uncouth. There was an inexplicable charm in the presence of these happy children in the drear surroundings in which we held place. There was such an absence of outside influences, such a dearth of aught to amuse or interest beyond our usual daily employments, that the slightest incident or experience standing apart from our rough toil could not fail to be heralded with pleasure and interest. And so, almost unconsciously, a certain poetic glamour came to surround Tamba and Jimmy-Jimmy, in the minds of all of us; and the two played,

and sang, and romped, and made the bush re-echo their happy laughter undisturbed and unchidden.

On occasions they would go together far a-field on hunting expeditions, after 'possums, iguanas, and kangaroo, accompanied by two or three gaunt dogs, half kangaroo-hound, half dingo; and then who so wildly happy as Tamba, who so formidable-looking as Jimmy-Jimmy? Then there were marauding expeditions, after emu and native-companion eggs, to be undertaken, and long delicious searches after wild fruits—quondongs, limes, nuts, and so on. And then there were toothsome edible roots to be dug up with pointed yam-sticks; the wild potato, binil-root, and many others; and above and beyond all, the delicious yam-like root of the curajong tree, termed by appreciative settlers bush cocoa-nut. All these searches the two tanned little hunters zealously prosecuted, never returning empty-handed, always tired and weary, but full of the day's sport, and eagerly planning fresh expeditions for the morrow.

And then the twenty horses I had brought with me required constant attention lest they should be straying away, and had to be run up into the temporary stock-yard morning and evening. That was the children's happiest time; that was the time for excitement and emulation, when Jimmy-Jimmy and Tamba, each perched on a charger without saddle and bridle, would go careering to and fro with a native grace of horsemanship that was born in both, driving up the unwilling horses with shouts and the lusty cracking of stock-whips. And, when the horses were yarded, it was something quite idyllic to see the two going from one to another, patting, stroking, and caressing each one. Tamba especially seemed to be fond of them, and would press her tanned little face caressingly against soft muzzles and silky skins, and talk tenderly and lovingly, so that whenever I saw her, I used to think the picture the scantily-clothed child made amongst the horses, one of the prettiest and quaintest I had ever seen.

And so with the two fled the happy, sunshiny days, all too short for enjoyment, bright and joyous every one; each morning bringing no cares, each night setting for them without sigh or sorrow.

With us and our work time went more slowly. But gradually and surely I saw rising around me the works of our hands and the results of our enterprise.

Time, which waits for no man, had revolved for over a year and a half when I noticed a change in the appearance and conduct of my two protégés. The boy was then about sixteen years, and had sprung up into a well-grown, active young fellow, agile and expert above his years. Tamba, too, had stepped, almost at a stride it seemed to me, from girlhood into maidenhood. My little woodland nymph had, almost imperceptibly, blossomed into a woman. The childish games were abandoned; the thoughtless fun and frolic were at an end. Tamba gave her attention now to more advanced, if not more womanly, pursuits. She delighted in hunting. Accompanied only by four or five gaunt dogs, as wild-looking and untamed as herself, she would scour the bush all round for miles, hunting the larger game, kangaroo and emu. Many a time have I watched the dusky Diana, as she set out on the day's expedition, tomahawk in hand, striding across the grassy woodlands with a step as bounding, an eye as flashing, and a figure as lithe and erect as the goddess of the chase herself possessed.

Tamba was not severe in her taste for dress. She did not like long garments; probably she found them a hindrance to freedom of movement. She was wont to cut her skirts lamentably short. To the degradation of boots, shoes, or stockings she never descended; and her head was never covered except by the thatch of abundant dark-coloured hair that crowded it. And so she would flash by, followed by her canine train, with a sparkle of her bright eyes, a gleam of her white teeth, a sweep of her short, flowing, and generally discoloured skirts, and a glow of colour from a crimson scarf she was accustomed to wear knotted loosely round her waist—a vision of wild, untrammelled, hardy, unfeminine-like grace, as goddess-like as was hers who was enamoured of the shepherd of Mount Latmos.

But with it all, happy as the girl was in her innocence, it seemed to me a pitiful fate for her to fritter away her womanhood in pursuits so unworthy—to pass her years in total ignorance of everything save what her hardy bush life taught her. For, as I have said, she had white blood in her veins, and was intelligent and prepossessing to a remarkable degree. She could speak English fairly, could sew, and possessed many little womanly traits that were natural to her, and stood out in bold relief against the grosser natures of her

black companions; though, alas! it must be confessed, her early training had done its utmost to counteract any little feminine refinements her partly white parentage had engendered. She loved her black companions—for quite a large number had collected in the vicinity, and were encamped about—and although I tried to keep her and her mother separate, I found it of no avail. Every night they made their camp in the midst of the blacks, and joined in their nightly revelry of whooping, dancing, and corroboreeing. Tamba, too, loved 'possums and iguanas, and even snakes—that is, to eat them—and it was sufficient cooking for her if they were just thrown on the wood ashes and merely warmed through. She did not love work or tasks that kept her attention fixed for more than a few minutes together; in short, outside her one pleasure of hunting, she was most ineradicably lazy.

But a chance was offered her of improvement.

On the nearest station some fifty miles away, the manager had been hardy enough to bring his wife and child to live with him. It was a dreary fate for a lady to have to face the hardships of an existence so cut off from social, almost human intercourse, such as life in these outside regions meant. But love in her case had been sufficient to conquer all other desires, and she had resolved—and carried out that resolve nobly—to face by her husband's side the trials and hardships of the life he had undertaken. The care of the child was a severe tax upon her, for she had many and constant household duties to attend to. She had been unable to induce a nurse to accompany her so far afield, and I knew was anxiously looking out for me to aid her in her maternal labours.

To see Mrs. Cliffe I made a special journey, and drew a picture so glowing of Tamba in her wild innocence and savage grace, that her interest was vividly aroused, and she declared herself willing to take the girl in her household, clothe her decently, and endeavour to bend her untutored spirit into the unaccustomed grooves of civilisation. In short, as she expressed it, "she would try and make a decent Christian of her."

With Tamba herself and her immediate protectors, Boman Jimmy and Sal, my interview was lively, if not actually stormy. At first the girl flatly refused to leave her friends and the home to which she was so much attached, and the father and mother

were equally opposed to the plan. But I had been accustomed to exact implicit obedience from the natives under every circumstance, for I had the power of turning them all adrift from the spot on which they had settled, and which they seemed to regard with some affection. I had likewise, by judicious presents of tobacco, tea, sugar, and flour, gained a certain ascendancy over them, and had even attained a slight moral elevation in their eyes by the practice of healing arts, through the administration in most cases of such patent medicines as I had brought with me—notably, Holloway's, Cackle's, and various ointments. So that in the end I persuaded the parties interested to fall in with the arrangement, and Tamba departed for her first inculcation in ways of life domestic, respectable, and orthodox.

As the weeks went by, whenever I happened to be in the neighbourhood, I made it a point to call in at the station and interview Mrs. Cliffe as to Tamba's progress in the ways of righteousness. But alas! I found my good offices in having severed her from her wild life were likely to prove abortive. Mrs. Cliffe complained terribly of her.

"The girl hasn't a bad nature," she said, "but she's a terrible charge. She's very loving with little Dolly," that was the child, "and that's what makes me overlook many other things. She'll sit half the day with the baby in her arms, crooning over her and talking to her in the most fantastic style. But then she's so very curious, you know, and so lazy, and flighty. She won't work, otherwise than care for little Dolly. She won't help in the household duties at all; and then every now and again she goes away, and I never see her perhaps for a couple of days. She says she gets tired, and must go hunting—just fancy that! And then the curious things she does. I gave her a very nice little room for her own, just outside the house, but with a door leading in, so that she should be under my eye. But she never sleeps in the bed—never will. She stretches her blanket on the floor, and lies on that. And then she keeps all kinds of curious things there—'possums, lizards, and roots, and things; and I once found even a snake. But the worst of it is," continued the kind-hearted lady, "she will go down to the camp and stop with the blacks whenever she can get an opportunity. And then they come up here after her. Once I found seven of the dirtiest, nastiest, ugliest



old gins," "gin" or "lubra" is the generic title of all married black women in Australia, "from the camp in her room, all sitting on the floor in a circle, smoking dirty clay pipes, and Tamba was smoking, too. And then she's fearfully dirty. I can't keep her clean. It's no use giving her a decent dress; she no sooner has one than it's not fit to be seen. She tears everything she has directly she gets it. I don't know what to do with her, I'm sure."

From Tamba herself—looking, I thought, particularly neat and becoming in her modest print gown—I heard a different story.

"All too much work," she said, with a gleam of her bright eyes and a pout of her full lips. "All day too much work. All day in house. Sweep. Look after piccaninny. Fetch 'um water. Clean 'um room. No good all that. Missie Cliffe too much talk. Baal that any good."

And she broke into a long tirade of complaints and grievances in a most energetic manner.

Of course I tried to reason with her, and exhorted her to try and persevere. Indeed I gained a half promise from her that she would; but very shortly after she broke the Gordian knot of the difficulty by running away.

She made her appearance one morning, to my surprise, in her old home at my settlement, shorn of all her respectability, clad in a dirty gown, without any covering on her head or feet; in exactly the same style as she had been wont to go about before the days of her trial at domesticity. She came up to me, seemingly unconscious that she had done wrong, happy in her newly-found freedom, dirty and wild-looking as she had ever been.

She smiled engagingly, and showed her gleaming teeth as she said:

"Me come back."

"So I see, Tamba," I answered gravely.

"What have you come for?"

"Me run away," she said, showing every white tooth in her head, and at last laughing outright. "Too much work alonga Missie Cliffe. No good too much work. Me ran away."

And in fact that was all I could ever get out of her. She positively refused to go back again under any circumstances; refused to do anything but idle the days away amongst her black companions, and, in short, became as demoralised and untutored as though she had never had a

short experience of respectability and propriety.

It was shortly after this that Tamba changed her condition in another sense of the word. One morning she came up to me, and without unnecessary preface, said with a flash of her white teeth, which generally accompanied most of her statements:

"Me going to be married."

There was an unsophisticated ingenuousness in the admission that was almost comical; but I had become indifferent to the girl and her fate, seeing little hope of reclaiming her after the futility of the first attempt, so I made little or no inquiry into the matter. But married she was, and that without much delay. As to the nature or character of the ceremony, I am in total ignorance, for Tamba absented herself from the camp for a few days and returned in the character of a married woman. Her husband was a stalwart black fellow, known as Powrie Charlie—a man whom I had employed in stripping bark for building purposes. He seemed to be very fond of his youthful bride, and, taking all things into consideration, Tamba began her married life under favourable circumstances. I made the young couple a wedding present of a pair of new blankets, two gleaming billy-cans, and for the bride herself a gaily-coloured print gown. And so they set up house-keeping.

But alas! after the first novelty of the change had died away, things did not go so smoothly for the young couple as could have been wished. Tamba developed a new trait in her character, love of admiration; which, with another which was the girl's dominant characteristic—impatience under control—engendered in Powrie Charlie's mind a counter feeling as strong and powerful, a feeling of jealousy. It was the man's nature to be overbearing and tyrannous, and this, I think, was the main cause of the frivolity and unwifely tendencies Tamba very soon developed.

The large camp of the natives, situated some five hundred yards from our own settlement, became all too often the scene of riot and disturbance. Tamba courted admiration, and her husband resented it; that was the cause. Fights took place almost every evening between the jealous husband and one or more of Tamba's admirers; the girl herself came in for a good deal of bad treatment at Powrie Charlie's hands; and for some time there



were continual noise and disturbance. My own "boy," Jimmy-Jimmy, became mixed up in the affair too; for he would fight like a tiger in defence of his sister. It is true that little serious damage was done, for all their warfare was carried on by means of waddies—that is, short clubs—which they constantly carried; and the head being the principal object of attack, and being in all cases of preternatural thickness, the utmost damage done was a bruising of scalps and a letting out of some hot blood. But the noise and riot proceeding from the camp almost all through the night was unbearable, and several of the quieter and older natives coming to me in complaint, I felt it incumbent to put down the nuisance as effectually as possible. Mere talking I found to be no good, it resulted in only temporary respite; so one evening when the disturbance was louder than usual, gun in hand and accompanied by a faithful henchman, I made my way over to the camp and summoned the delinquents before me.

Powrie Charlie came, waddy in hand, with a brow as black as thunder. Tamba came, wild-eyed and panting, with the blood trickling from a wound in the forehead, which I could see had been caused by a blow from a waddy. Jimmy-Jimmy came, with his eyes flashing fire, clutching a heavy axe-handle.

Without further preface I delivered my verdict—husband and wife must leave the camp with the morrow, and never return. But Tamba burst into tears, and flatly refused. She said she was frightened to go with her liege lord, that she hated him, and wanted to stop with Jimmy-Jimmy and her mother. I was somewhat at a loss what to do, for I could see the girl was terrified at the idea; and I knew well enough that she would meet with rough treatment at the hands of her husband, if she was not absolutely injured or even murdered. But I made up my mind that one, if not both, must go, for the sake of peace and quietness; so, turning to the scowling Powrie Charlie, I bade him roughly go and never return, under penalty of being shot. There was a vast amount of jabbering, and some show of resistance, at this arbitrary dismissal; but the natural instinct of obedience to a stronger will, and the knowledge that I would keep my threat, ultimately prevailed: and the element of discord was thrust forth from the camp, never to return. And so peace and concord reigned once again in

our primitive settlement, and things went on much more satisfactorily than they had done previous to my somewhat arbitrary interposition.

In the course of time, Tamba became a mother, and then a change, great and complete, seemed wholly to revolutionise her character. She altered in a wonderful manner. The wildness of her disposition vanished; her frivolity and want of decorum were forgotten; she became, all at once, womanly, motherly, docile, and tractable.

How she did love the dusky imp that called her mother! Her days were spent in tending the child; she seemed to have neither ears nor eyes for anything else. She used to separate herself during the day almost entirely from her fellows, and sit crooning to the child, and petting it, and showing her affection in every conceivable way. Nothing pleased her more than to see the piccaninny admired; nothing delighted her more than to dress it and trick it out in the most gaudy tags and remnants she could lay her hands on. She used to bring the yelling little brat almost every day for me to admire and watch its progress, and a few words of admiration on my part would open all the floodgates of her eloquence in bursts of maternal pride. She certainly was a most devoted mother; which was all the more surprising, for, as a rule, the dusky mothers of the bush are wont to let their offspring scramble into maturity the best way they can. But with Tamba, if her ugly piccaninny was ill or out-of-sorts, she was inconsolable; if it was happy and doing well, she was all smiles and laughter. She was still accustomed to take occasional long rambles in the bush, always carrying her cherished offspring with her; more for the sake, I think, of being able to admire the child in strict privacy, than for any other reason, for she never indulged in hunting at that time, further than to procure an occasional 'possum or 'guana for her mid-day meal.

But a great misfortune was to overshadow her life before her dusky babe had opened its eyes many months in the little sphere of bush-world that bounded it.

I had been out one day far afield, searching after some of the horses which had strayed away from about the camp during the night, and was returning without having caught a glimpse of them or their tracks, when, some three miles from our encampment, shrill sounds of lamentation

attracted my attention. I recognised the cry at once. It was the piercing notes of mourning the blacks give utterance to on the death of one of their number. I rode over to the spot whence the sounds proceeded, and discovered Tamba stretched out prone on the ground under a ragged honeysuckle tree, uttering heart-broken cries of distress. I dismounted, and raised her up; but there was little occasion to question, for by her side lay her few-months-old child, cold and stark, with the blood oozing from a fearful wound in the head.

It was some time before I could glean any information from Tamba as to the nature of the tragedy, for she was so overcome with grief, so wildly hysterical and vehement, that I really thought sorrow had turned her brain.

I never learnt the full particulars of the tragedy. Tamba was always reticent about it, even when all sorrow for her loss had passed from her mind; but from her broken sentences I gleaned that she, whilst rambling about with the child, met her husband, Powrie Charlie, armed with boomerang, waddy, and spear, evidently out on a hunting expedition; that high words had passed between them; and that he had violently demanded that she should accompany him to where he was camped, and resume wifely relations. She had refused, Tamba said hysterically, and he had tried to force her, which, she resisting, in a fit of passion and jealousy he had struck at her with his waddy, hitting the child a savage blow on the head. But whether it was done by accident or design, she could not say. She did not remember anything more before my arrival. Powrie Charlie must have fled; but she knew of nothing further than her great loss.

Such was Tamba's broken story. But, pitiable as the tragedy was at the time, it turned out to be a blessing that proved a turning point in her life. For the time being, however, her grief was inconsolable. She took the defunct piccaninny home with her; plastered her face, hands, and feet all over with mud; made a species of rough bark coffin, or case, for the body; and mourned long and sincerely after true aboriginal fashion.

She received great sympathy from all hands. The rough bushmen and workmen showed their sense of pity in many ways. One and all swore to put a bullet in the cowardly murderer if he ever made his

appearance in the camp; and many kind words were said, and little presents made, to the bereaved mother.

Her brother Jimmy-Jimmy, however, took a different line of action. One day he took boomerang and waddy, and, girding up his loins, disappeared mysteriously from the camp for several days. When he returned, I knew what he had been after; but, though I questioned him closely, he never would admit the truth. That he had been to avenge his sister's wrongs I knew, and that he had succeeded I knew also; but whether he had clubbed his enemy to death, or speared him, or what, I never could learn. However, it was a sinister fact that Powrie Charlie was never seen again; so that, in my mind, the result of Jimmy-Jimmy's expedition was only too evident.

Poor Tamba! Her grief was profound. It was actually pitiable to see her for some time after her loss, she wore such a hopeless, spiritless look, and seemed so utterly prostrated in mind and body. But, as is always the case, even the deepest maternal grief must find alleviation, and Tamba's, in the ordinary sequence of events, succumbed to time and forgetfulness.

But she was an altered woman ever afterwards. The depths of her nature had been plumbed—affliction and distress in her worked good, because they conquered and absorbed the frivolity and savagery of her nature. Some month or so after the death of the child, she came up to me of her own accord, and asked me to try and get her again the situation she had filled before in Mrs. Cliffe's household. She was sure she would like it now, and would try hard to please.

She holds the situation of nurse there now, and is spoken of in the highest terms by her mistress, whenever I happen to see or hear from that lady. All the affection she had for her own child seems to be transferred to little Dolly. Tamba has developed into a solicitous, trustworthy, respectable nurse. She is quite a travelled woman, too; for she has been down in her capacity of nurse, to Sydney and Melbourne with Mr. and Mrs. Cliffe, and has had her mind wonderfully expanded by all she has seen. So that, what with her love for her protectors, and her obedience, intelligence, and industry, as Mrs. Cliffe says, Tamba is in a fair way of becoming—if she has not already become—quite a Christian.

## ROUGHING IT ON THE LOMONDS.

AND so, Petrea, you are wondering what has become of us?

We are "gone away" like the fox, and have not been run to earth yet. People have been asking, you say, whether we are in the Highlands, or by the sea-side, or if we have crossed the Channel, or emigrated, or what possible corner of the earth we are to be found in?

Don't tell them, Petrea. We are having a glorious time of it, but if we were to hear even a whisper of a proposed invasion by any of the worshippers of "les convenances," we should take flight to the wilderness of rabbit-warrens near at hand, and be heard of no more. We are in full possession of the sweets of liberty for the time being, and I'll tell you how we have distanced Mrs. Grundy, if you will keep our secret.

Well, my dear, we are "roughing it" on the Lomonds, just over the one-thousand-foot line, far from the haunts of men, and bakers' carts. Think of this as you sit on the hot beach, and listen to the discordant bray of a German band! Think of the sweep of the "caller air" over the heather; think of the luxury of lying on the soft springy, natural turf, and lazily letting the eyes wander for miles below, over fields, and woods, and villages, away to the coast-line, far, far beneath, where the sunlight shows the "silver sea," and the Bass Rock, and the ships sailing up the Forth. But one is too much alive up here for laziness, and to us now, it is far more delightful to be off day after day on some quest—either for white heather, mushrooms, or blackberries, or wickedly to "gump" trout in the clear brown streams. We array ourselves in garments of an ancient date and cut—things that can't spoil; and away we go, over bog and moor, stone dykes or crags, to return, as the evening closes in, laden with the spoil of some sort—either useful or ornamental.

The place of our abode—at night, or in rainy weather—is a deserted farm-house, standing under the slope of a hill, and sheltered on the other side by a thick clump of trees; while down towards the south runs the sunny steep incline of the kitchen-garden, between old grey walls, with perfect hedges of box borders. The farm "toun"—as they call the yard and outbuildings—is really extensive. A great square of stables, cowsheds, barns, and

granaries, fronts the kitchen door, but the grass is growing thick under foot; not a horse is to be seen in the stables; the barns are empty; the cowstalls are shut up, except when the shepherd's one beast comes in at night; and a solitary pig lives a retired and reflective life in a sty removed from his kind by many a mile.

The shepherd and his wife are the only occupants of the house, of which they inhabit two rooms, and the rest are left to fall into ruin, just as their owner deserted them, and, taking all his household gods with him, left them to the rats and the mildew.

This is a queer mixture of a description, isn't it? Out of doors, all sunshine and fresh air; the only sounds the gurgling of the wee streams, the bleating of the sheep—which are grazing in hundreds—and the hum of the bees over the heather; and indoors, stillness, gloom, the gnawing of the rats, and the eerie sighing of the wind through unused rooms and passages.

Well, that is the way it struck us at first.

We had made a picnic up to the hills, and this place had been described to us as the only one where the horse could be put up anywhere near our destination.

The road to the farm is execrable—almost impossible—and the higher we came, the wilder and more desolate became our surroundings. We passed more than one ruin, where once the sons of the soil had found work to do and roofs to cover them. A farm-house, with empty broken windows and door-places, looks out from between the trees; the mill-stream still flows in its wooden bed, with no wheel to turn; and the cottars' houses stand by the road-side, with no ploughman's foot to cross the threshold, no gudewife by the hearth, and no bairns with their "pieces" in their hands about the door. When we looked at all these dwellings, and saw the rich crop of hay growing in the fields close by, it seemed hard that so many hundreds of acres should yield sustenance only to sheep, when there had been a time when more than a dozen families had lived and thriven on this very hill-side.

Standing on the brae above the house, among the heather, and feeling the cool fresh rush of the breeze upon our faces, we seemed to take in large draughts of the wine of life; to feel bigger, stronger somehow, more capable of taking hold of things in general; and the same idea seems to have occurred to D. and me at the same time.

"What a splendid place this would be to freshen up body and mind, if we could only stay here for a while!"

We consulted together over the possibilities, over the difficulties of getting supplies for the pulpit, and for the dinner table; over the headaches that had attended sermon-writing, and the longing we all felt for an out-of-door life; and then we went into the farm-house and surveyed.

A big dining-room, with long windows and splendid views; gray ashes on the rusty hearth; and an old gun on the mantel-piece; and dark stains on the floor. D. looked at me with a queer droop at the corners of his mouth.

"Wants scrubbing," said I, alluding to the floor; "the grate wants cleaning, and so do the windows, but it would be a capital room then."

He seemed to feel rather despondent while we inspected the rest of the rooms; but I did not give in.

"We'll get a cartload of furniture up, and clean it out, and make it at least as good as a weather-proof tent. We'll only bring our German maid Gustel to help us, and we shall solve the greatest mystery of the age: how to leave home for a real holiday without expense; for surely they cannot want much rent for this place."

D. smiled. "After our experiences in the Highlands last year," said he, "I believe they would want rent for a packing-case, or a stone sarcophagus."

"But not on the Lomonds."

"We shall see."

And so we did, for to our joy we discovered that the possessor of the sheep-farm was a friend of our own, who looked upon the farm-house very much as a kind of lumber; and was very willing to lend it to us as long as we liked, and would not hear of payment. So in double-quick time, seeing the season was so far advanced, and in secrecy—that no respectable neighbours might hear of our doings, and be politely surprised that we thought of existing in such a style, or rather in such a want of style—we packed up most of our absolute necessities, such as beds, and one table, a saucepan, a frying-pan, and a tea-kettle, and away we came. The luggage in an enterprising carrier's cart; and we, some riding, some walking, all in a hurry to get rid of civilised life.

Oh, Petrea, how you would have laughed if you had seen our first "settling in!"

Our house-warming consisted in a dinner

which we gave to the carter, and to receive which he calmly ensconced himself on a cushioned seat by the fire, with his hat on and his pipe in his mouth, while I cooked the bacon and eggs. Gustel (the maid) was horrified at this, though her stolidity is proof against most things. But John had intended to be perfectly polite: the pipe was merely to show that he was in no hurry; and, as for the hat, why, who thinks of lifting that in Fife, much less sitting without it? I so often see the men sitting in their cottages with their hats on, that I think perhaps they sleep in them.

Our unpacking proceeded, and, amidst mingled mirth and dismay, it was found that we had brought no looking-glass whatever, except one inch in the back of a pocket-comb. D. announced joyfully that he would never shave again. The others were equally stoical; but at the end of three days we were all getting so hideous that we had to borrow one from the shepherd's wife, at which glass, being placed in a conspicuous position, we all take it in turns to adorn ourselves.

Then the fender had been forgotten, and there was an obvious tendency on the part of our little son to walk undismayed into the hot ashes, and take the tea-kettle by the nose.

But genius—true genius—is equal to any emergency.

After a mysterious absence D. arrived, bringing a rustic erection which does double duty—as fender and fire-guard. He had found a quantity of fir-wood, which he was allowed to use as he liked; so he set to work, and produced a hall table, and clothes-rack, a kitchen table, and—crowning wonder!—a sideboard.

This work of art, also constructed of fir-wood, still in the bark, looms large and majestic, in a kind of petticoat or flounce of bright yellow satteen, which conceals the boots of the household, and drapes the nether extremities of the sideboard, leaving only about two inches of very rough brown wooden legs exposed.

That piece of resplendent satteen, poked into a trunk with a hope that it would turn out useful somehow, raises the sideboard to the level of a Roman Catholic village altar, and no mortal could enter the room dominated by this ornamental and very useful piece of furniture, and say that we were admirers of the commonplace.

D.'s appearance at the wood-pile, with his eye-glass, clerical collar, red fez, short jacket, and long saw is unique.



Seeing that jugs and wash-basins are at a premium, and yet retaining too many of our ancient prejudices to be completely satisfied with a wet, rough-towel scrubbing in the mornings, a procession of the faithful has been inaugurated, which takes place daily, while the ham is being frizzled in the dining-room.

D. comes first, bearing mugs—glasses being a luxury we do not possess—brushes, soap, etc.; J. follows with towels and sponges; then comes W., proud bearer of a tin basin; and I bring up the rear with my little son and heir, who is usually on these occasions in a state of uproarious delight, openly defying the ducks, and making game of King Chanticleer himself, though a grunt from the pig, and the sight of an unclean snout fills his little soul with terror.

So round the farm we go, down by the grassy road behind the out-houses to the spring, where it bursts clear and fresh out of the old dyke below the hill.

Ah, Petrea! the lazy luxury of the possessor of an æsthetic jug and basin, with all the impossible flowers on them that ever danced before the eyes of a demented Japanese, cannot touch the delight of that pure cold stream which we catch as it comes gushing out from between the grey boulders—swaying the heads of the ferns to and fro with the force of its flow, and filling the cups of the delicate green lichens with diamonds. The sheep on the other side of the dyke look up in timid wonderment, as our shouts of delight, or gasps at the shock of the cold water over head and ears, fill the air.

But there are no discordant sounds; no clanging of hotel bells; no shrill cries from fish or newspaper vendors; no horrible railway whistle comes up to trouble the wholesome quiet, so delicious to tired nerves.

It is so clear that, miles away, we see the tall chimneys of the towns on the coast-line, and away beyond the Forth lie the cornfields of the Lothians, the Lammermoor Hills, and the Pentlands.

"How glorious the Loch will be after breakfast!" says one.

"True enough," says another, "but how glorious breakfast will be first!" And he points to where Gustel stands, with a big apron enveloping her solid proportions, and a welcoming smile on her broad cheeks.

After breakfast a grand stampede is made round the corner of the hill to where Loch

Leven, with its eleven islands, lies in dazzling brightness before us.

Down we go through the woods where the raspberry gatherers are hard at work, and on to the shore of the Loch in search of a boat.

Once found, we are soon floating over the sunny calm of its waters, while the actual hard facts of Queen Mary's imprisonment in the ruined castle are discussed, and we try to separate truth from romance, and the Mary Stuart of Sir Walter Scott's imagination from the Mary Stuart now so hated by many of the descendants of her liege subjects.

And so the time wears on, each day treading on the heels of the next, making us feel how short our holiday is, and determining us to profit by our discovery of how to "rough it" in the future.

## UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

*Author of "The Chilcotes," etc.*

### CHAPTER VII.

It did not seem quite so possible in the cold, practical light of the morning, when John Temple swallowed his coffee, and buttoned his great-coat before facing the November rigours. He always breakfasted alone, and sometimes even prepared the meal himself, when the little servant had slept late and forgotten him. It was people's way to forget John, and it was his way to let them do it. It is your vixenish, ill-conditioned person who is best served, most eagerly waited on, most implicitly obeyed.

Sarah never forgot her mistress's breakfast tray, nor failed to assist at Jessie's slow and painful toilet. "But as for master, bless you, you might leave his bed unmade till night, his room undusted for a week, and he would never complain!"

And yet this same John upon whose good-nature everybody imposed; who ate cold mutton with cheerfulness; who took his breakfast bacon without mustard rather than trouble some one to make it for him; who hardly grumbled audibly when the tea was lukewarm, and the milk scanty; this same John who had rated himself for his thoughtlessness last night—did he not again transgress? Was he not on the following night late also, and did he not once more return without the healthy appetite he usually brought to bear upon the high-tea waiting at home to be eaten?

For it is with high-tea that Rosebery Terrace greets its returning husbands, fathers, and brothers. A walk up the little street about seven o'clock is almost as stimulating as a promenade among the seventeen satisfying odours of Cologne. Behind every little bow window, a teapot is steaming; from every little kitchen arises a savour of roast and boiled, of stewed and fried. As each householder turns in at his own particular gate, you can tell to a dead certainty, without being a magician, what will occupy his leisure during the next half-hour. Paterfamilias will have it all his own way; he will eat and he will drink, while mamma and the young ones, who have dined frugally at one o'clock, will nibble at bread and butter to keep him company.

For John, too, there was spread a good tea, a better tea than usual, as with the last nodded good-night, he parted from his comrades of the City, and passed under his own roof. Why then should he have gone with a hanging head—an abstracted, one might almost say a furtive air?

"You don't seem to have much appetite, John," said Jessie almost with resentment. When there was anything specially good to eat, it was selfish of John not to be hungry.

"Perhaps the cutlet is tough?" she said, as if daring him to make this assertion.

"It is excellent—most tender," he hastened to assure her. "Won't you let me give you just a morsel—?"

She waved the proposal aside so authoritatively that he ended his persuasions precipitately.

"You know I never touch meat at night," she said. "A nice example it would be for Sarah if I were to begin taking hot suppers—after the struggle I've had with her about her beer. She would demand bacon for breakfast next."

John's appetite, or lack of it, and Sarah's appetite and its excess—it knew no lack—were fertile and oft-threshed topics on Jessie's lips; when you have but a very narrow little world to dwell in, you scan and criticise its details with a minuteness impossible to those who can claim a larger sphere.

John had the City's mighty pulses to set his own a-throbbing, and the humours of his fellow-citizens to amuse him in his quiet way; Jessie's world had but two inhabitants—John and Sarah, Sarah and John; on these were the frequent changes rung.

To-night, it was Sarah, her delinquencies, her airs, her defiance in the matter of caps, her latest breakage; and he was meanly, while yet ashamedly, glad of it.

It did Sarah—who was skilled in self-defence—no harm, and it sheltered him from reluctant confession. For had he not haunted the tea-shop in the Brompton Road? Had he not, to cover his restlessness, his glances at the door, his starts of expectancy, invested in pie to an extent that surprised the waitress, whom it might seem nothing would astonish? He had lingered over his meal, he had given to each bite more than the deliberation of a Gladstone, and had gone, after all, unrewarded.

No Tilly, blushing rose-red under the many glances, no Uncle Bob, loudly cheerful and happily assertive, was there. They had passed into another world, and as he went his way, he wondered at his folly in dreaming that the meeting on which he built so many vague hopes might take place here. Was a lady who inhabited a mansion in Prince's Gate—a Mrs. Popham, with silken-calved, powder-locked footmen, likely to encourage her guests to haunt an eating-house in the Brompton Road—an eating-house where pie, where tripe, where saveloys, where shrimps in their season were consumed by the little clerk and the little shop-girl? To another world, indeed, had Miss Tilly fled—a world where the cups were of Sèvres, the salvers of gold, the footmen gentlemen of high degree.

"Actually the milkman, when only last week I had spoken about the baker, and threatened to write to his mistress—John, you're not listening; you're not attending to a word I say," came in sharp accents from the sofa.

"Yes, my dear, yes," said John, guilty and conscience-stricken. "You were saying that the baker——"

"I was saying that the baker," mimicked Jessie—"well, what was I saying about the baker? Of course you don't know. You don't know, and you don't care, not you! The house might go to wreck and ruin; Sarah might steal everything we possess; she might set the place on fire and burn us to cinders, before you moved so much as a little finger to help us! I wish you wouldn't sit and stare; if you have nothing to say, and if you don't care to listen when I try my best to entertain you, why don't you take a book? Oh, don't mind me, pray! I'm used to being neglected," cried Jessie, growing mo-

mentarily more excited and hysterical. "I don't expect you to share my troubles, I can bear them alone. Go and smoke, and enjoy yourself; go and moon and dream about that Scotch girl—the girl who is pretty, and lively, and healthy, not sick, and old, and ugly before her time, like me. Oh, you think I don't know! You think I can't guess where your thoughts are while you sit and stare, and never listen to a word I say!"

John had a pretty bad quarter of an hour after this. Perhaps he thought he deserved it, and thus summoned patience and forbearance. He could not take this entertainment that Jessie provided for him humorously; he found nothing sprightly or amusing in her impotent anger; no pleasantry in her tears and reproaches. When cousin Fred came, as he did when he wanted John's help in any matter, it was as good as a comedy for him to find Jessie in one of her rages. To him it was an excellent joke—material for laughter, and banter, and chaff—but not so to John. To him the comedy was old—old and stale, and sad as a weight of lead at his heart.

Yet, will it be believed that this same John, who spent an evening in bitterness of spirit, in contrition and repentance, happy when Jessie tardily and grudgingly forgave him, yielded once again to temptation? Oh, pretty faces, oh, smiling looks, what a responsibility is this witching gift of yours!

John, wiser now, forsook the tea-shop. Experience was making him cunning in avoiding detection, and in order to be home in time—to evade, perhaps, that reproachful watch which Sarah kept for him at the gate, that questioning demand in Jessie's hungry eyes—he indulged in the daring extravagance of a hansom from the City to Prince's Gate.

What he meant to do when he got there was not very clear to himself, perhaps. He had but dismissed the man, and was staring at the flood of light that came from the uncurtained windows—hoping, maybe, that a slim figure would flit across that radiance—when a hand fell smartly on his shoulder.

"And what, most worthy cousin, may you be doing here?" laughed Fred, seeming to extract great inward amusement from John's startled, guilty air, as he turned to face the new-comer. "Have you deserted the happy groves of Fulham to worship at Mrs. Popham's shrine? Were

you going to serenade her? Don't let me hinder you."

"Do you know Mrs. Popham?" cried John, too busy with his wonder to pay heed to Fred's pleasantries.

"I have that honour," said Fred, still laughing, "but I didn't know she numbered you among her admirers."

"Stuff!" said John, shaking off his bewilderment; "I never saw the woman in my life. I heard of her from some—some people that I met, that was all. And I thought as I was passing near"—the evasion stuck in his throat—"I'd take a look at the house. Seems very bright and gay," he guiltily tried to speak lightly. "I suppose she has a lot of friends?"

"Friends—friends—has anybody friends in London?" said Fred musingly, following some mental line of his own. "Acquaintances in abundance, in superabundance—acquaintances who come and go, and mostly go, after a time—these she has in common with all of us. But this isn't one of her reception days. All that brilliance is for my sole benefit."

He had taken his cousin's arm, and was pacing the pavement with him. Apparently he was in no great haste to claim his privilege.

"If I had a home like that, now, and lived alone," said John, with what seemed to him quite a brilliant stroke of diplomacy, "I should want to be pretty sociable, and to have people stopping with me—people from the country, and that sort of thing. I dare say Mrs. Popham has country friends visiting her at this time of year?"

"If she has, she manages to conceal them successfully," said Fred, giving but a careless attention. "She's hardly the sort of person to be very fond of country cousins, if she has any. Sorry to destroy your ideal," Fred began to laugh again, "but I'm afraid the Mrs. Popham of your imagination differs somewhat from the Mrs. Popham waiting up there for me. She does not share your benevolent love of antiquated uncles, and venerable aunts, and dowdy old-maid cousins."

"They might be young," corrected John, feeling unaccountably disappointed.

"They might, but that would hardly compensate if they were also provincial. So you are curious about Mrs. Popham, are you, and you would like to see her?" Fred seemed to see something exquisitely comical in this idea. "Well, I'll introduce you some day—nothing easier. One good turn deserves another, and you can

do me a favour, if you like. Odd that I should meet you when I was just thinking of running down to your place to-night."

"Anything I can do," said John, striving after cordiality. Long experience had taught him what a visit from the gay Fred meant. "If it's a matter of a trifling loan——"

"You've hit it on the head. A trifling loan—a mere temporary obligation while waiting for remittances, to put it professionally. Lucky dog you, to be able to lend anybody anything! I couldn't scrape five pounds together to-night to save my dearest friend from the jaws of the destroyer. You don't happen to have a tenner about you, do you?"

"No, not so much, certainly not so much as that." John made a show of feeling in his pockets. "I might manage to let you have it to-morrow, perhaps."

"All right, but it must be early to do any good. One o'clock—you can manage it before one? And about Mrs. Popham," he went on, as the other nodded, "I'll take you there some day, with all the pleasure in life. You will be immensely amused; she's great fun. I'll tell her you are coming, and she'll receive you with open arms. I'd take you with me now, but I've a trifle of business to discuss with her—something she wants me to do for her. Another time——"

"I couldn't go to night, anyhow."

"You're going home to Jessie, I suppose. How is the fair Jessie?"

"Not very well," said Jessie's brother, suddenly pulled up and confronted with a vision of Sarah's fluttering ribbons and pert face at the gate.

"Jessie in one of her tantrums," Fred commented inwardly. "Well, I mustn't keep you," he said aloud, pausing at the foot of the steps; "we all know what a model brother you are."

"I suppose you come here often?" John asked, with another glance at the lighted panes.

"Depends. Let me see. Was I here yesterday, or the day before?" Fred was not unwilling to hint at his intimacy with this fashionable lady. "Often enough not to forget my promise. I'll look you up

some day in the City, and we'll come together. And you'll remember—to-morrow, one sharp, at latest?"

"All right," said John, turning away once again from the allurements of those lighted windows, and taking the dark November night for his portion. He was not likely to forget the price he had paid for an introduction to Mrs. Popham. Ten pounds is a large slice out of an income that allows of no wide margin for extravagance, and he knew that that hardly-spared sum was not likely to return to his possession when once he had parted with it. Fred, poor fellow, entertained the best intentions in the world; debtors usually do, and expect that these shall be placed to their credit in the settlement of accounts; but intentions, as we all know, are good for nothing but paving-stones to a country where a man's best meanings will not entitle him to any mercy.

Fred, while he took the money, reserved to himself the privilege of thinking his cousin a fool, and perhaps John was never nearer being one than when he yielded to Fred's pleas. He philosophically abandoned all right to the sum in question when he sent it punctually next day. It only meant a little more self-denial on his part: no more hansoms, for instance, or teas in the Brompton Road; but these were easily relinquished. And it might mean—what might it not mean if it opened the gates of Mrs. Popham's paradise to him? For he clung to the belief that the strangers—the strangers who were, as he had almost persuaded himself, his own near kin—were this lady's guests.

They had been invited, and were expected. He had himself seen the door opened and the two pass in; he had even lingered a little, and they had not come out again.

It was simpler to believe that Fred was mistaken. It might easily have been three days, rather than two, since Fred had gone there last; and, if that were so, he could not possibly know of their arrival. Those lights that he arrogantly took for his welcome were for them—for Tilly. If she were not there, where in all this wide wilderness of London could she be?